

The President's Daily Brief

12 September 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

12 September 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

We have additional confirmation that the Communists are directing their cadre to prepare for another offensive burst in South Vietnam beginning this month and continuing into October; the Communists hope that the campaign will force major concessions from the allies. (Page 1)

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The Soviets are flying naval reconnaissance missions out of Cuba for the first time ever as part of their surveillance of activities leading to a major NATO naval exercise. (Page 7)

Soviets (Page 8)

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Chilean President Allende has publicly invited the Christian Democrats to resume talks aimed at calming political tensions. (Page 9)

Domestic opposition in Japan and Taipei's refusal to talk have complicated Tokyo's planning for relations with Taiwan after recognition of Peking. (Page 10)

In Morocco, King Hassan apparently remains confident that he can cope with his precarious political situation. (Page 11)

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The Soviets

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SOUTH VIETNAM

[redacted] COSVN has instructed its subordinates to prepare for a campaign designed to tie down Saigon's main forces while the Communists attempt to extend their control in the countryside and roll back the pacification program. Local forces and main force sapper and artillery units allegedly will conduct most of the action in September, hitting friendly military installations, district towns, and government outposts. In October, main forces are to lead an offensive designed to "threaten urban areas, disrupt South Vietnamese administrative functions, and deplete the government's military forces and supplies" so that the allies will be "forced to negotiate a settlement on the basis of the seven points."

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Cadre have been told to be "determined to maintain the offensive and uprising at the present level, and, at the same time, to build up our armed and political forces rapidly so that we can fight for a long time." The instructions stress the need for the quick recruitment in September of many new troops for use in October. They claim that if the allies prove willing to reach a political settlement that "favors" the Communists, enemy forces will be used to achieve "greater victories" during the ceasefire period. If the allies refuse to negotiate an end to the war prior to the US presidential elections, "we will be able to use our armed and political forces to return to a prolonged state of warfare and fight on indefinitely until the enemy is defeated."

Communist main forces allegedly have been told to "thrust far into the provinces around Saigon" and "penetrate the Saigon defense line." [redacted]

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[redacted] by early September the enemy 7th and 9th divisions had already established elements in provinces adjacent to the capital. In fact, Communist sapper and small-element attacks against government strongpoints have increased recently northwest of Saigon, and there are numerous indications that the enemy is concentrating forces in Hau Nghia, southern Tay Ninh, and southern Binh Duong provinces for a more substantial round of assaults, including infantry attacks on urban centers. Main elements of the Communists' 7th and 9th divisions appear to be maintaining the positions they held during the previous fighting around An Loc and along Route 13, but parts of the 7th Division, at least, could quickly move closer to Saigon.

(continued)

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COSVN's instructions appear to correspond rather closely with the Communists' current public line on negotiations, which is stressing the demand for a three-segment coalition government that presumably would leave some, if not most, of the South Vietnamese administrative mechanism intact as one segment of the coalition. The instructions state that a "victory" over the US means a political settlement and the withdrawal of American forces. It does not "mean that the Saigon puppets cease to exist." To deal with the remaining government apparatus, cadre are urged to be in position to act "quickly and forcefully" against South Vietnamese Government personnel in the event of a political settlement.

* * *

The COSVN instruction above deals with tactics to force the allies to the negotiating table. On 11 September, the Viet Cong's "provisional government" (PRG)--nominally COSVN's superior--issued a statement indicating its major goals in such negotiations and explaining in detail some of its demands. The statement appears consistent with COSVN's directive.

* * *

The PRG asserts that it is "prepared to reach agreements to the effect that neither a Communist regime nor a US-stooge regime shall be imposed on South Vietnam." This assertion is obviously designed to rebut the charge that the Communists are demanding outright control in Saigon as part of a settlement. Communist spokesmen have been saying in recent weeks that Hanoi has no intention of imposing a Communist government on the South, but this is the first time the PRG has talked in terms of a formal agreement on the point.

The statement calls for an end to the "US military involvement in Vietnam" in language reminiscent of the Viet Cong's two-point "elaboration" last February; it does not demand, however, that the US set a deadline for its withdrawal. Nor is there any explicit call for President Thieu's resignation or for the dismantling of Saigon's "oppressive machinery," although another section of the statement does make it clear that the Communists still want Thieu out of the picture before too long. Instead, the statement focuses, as other recent pronouncements have tended to do, on the three-segment "government

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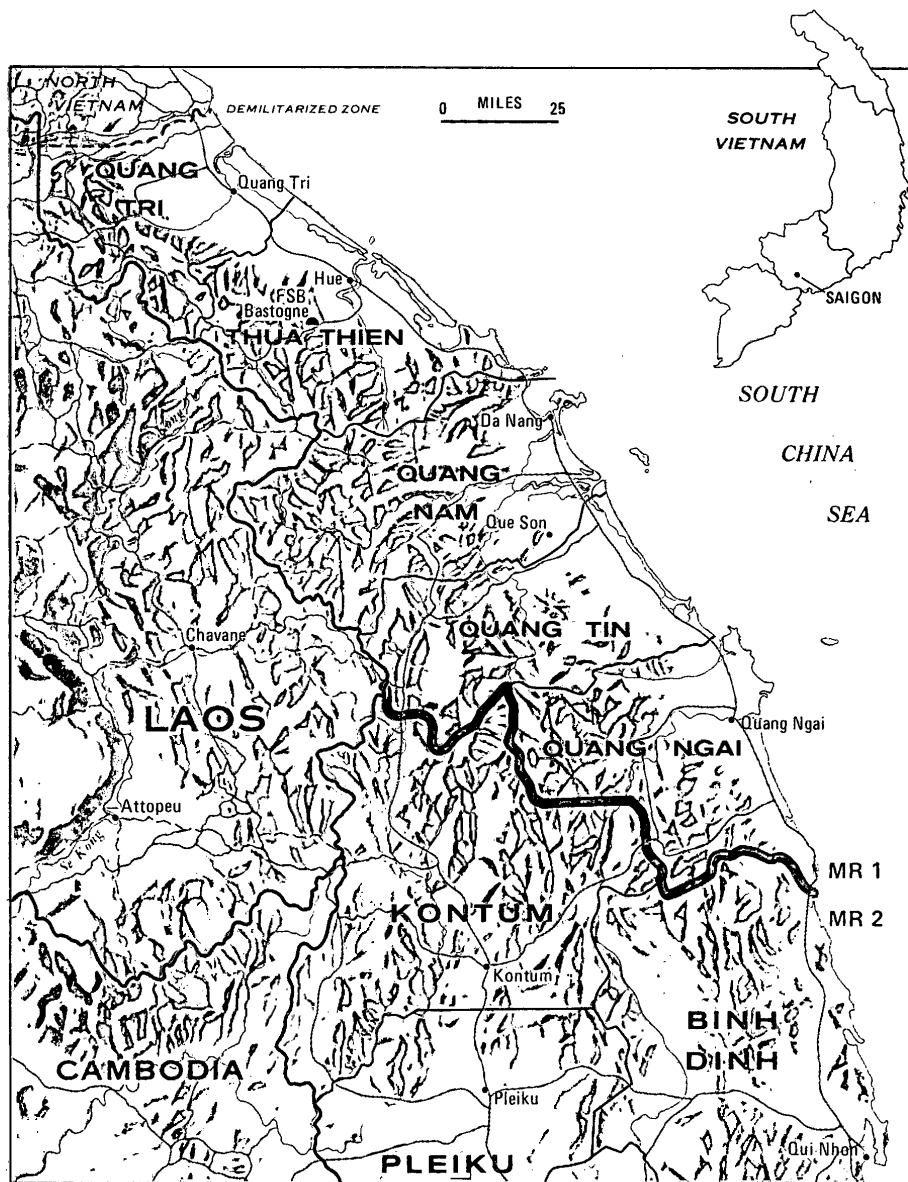
of national concord" called for in both the seven-point proposal and the two-point "elaboration." It asserts that a settlement "must proceed from the actual situation that there exist in South Vietnam two administrations, two armies, and other political forces," and it claims that the establishment of a "concord" government is "necessary" to guarantee "democratic freedom." At one point the statement provides an explanation that Communist spokesmen have refused to provide at such an authoritative level in the past on how such a government would be set up: the PRG and the Saigon government (minus Thieu) would each appoint a third of the membership, and the other third would be appointed "through negotiations," apparently among the Vietnamese parties concerned.

Taken at face value, this statement appears to be the most authoritative expression to date of Communist willingness, once the allies have accepted the principles of a political settlement, to negotiate the specific modalities with the Saigon government. The statement touts the virtues of the seven points and the "elaboration," however, in a way that makes it clear that Hanoi is ready to revert to a tougher line if necessary.

The message conveyed by the PRG statement and the COSVN instructions is that the Communists are planning to commit substantial elements of their main and local forces to another offensive burst in the hope that it will force major concessions from the allies. They appear to be prepared to abandon some of their detailed demands on the exact shape of a political settlement in return for agreement on the principle of a three-segment coalition that would bring them formally, if perhaps loosely, into the central power structure. At the same time, they appear to be carefully preserving their options for continuing the war along present lines if they fail to force a settlement. They do not appear to be preparing for one last, all-out assault after which they would simply accept the best terms available.

* * *

South Vietnamese forces are pressing their effort to recapture Quang Tri City despite determined enemy resistance. Ranger and Airborne units have



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been fighting around the clock against Communist forces to the north and south of the town, and a forward Marine unit reportedly has entered the citadel. Casualties on both sides have been heavy. South Vietnamese 1st Division elements are also attacking southwest of Fire Support Base Bastogne in Thua Thien Province and are encountering stiff opposition.

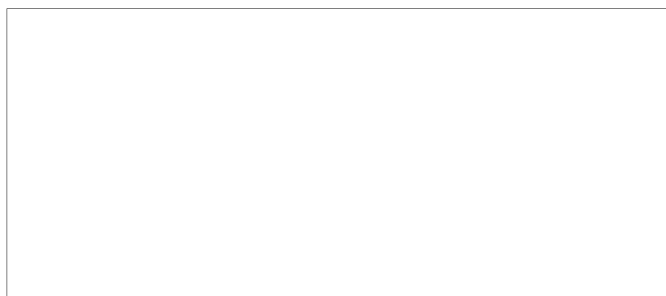


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ISRAEL - ARAB STATES

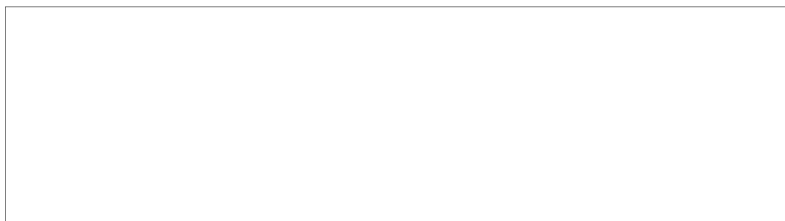


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There have been other indications that the guerrillas, related with the outcome of the Munich affair, intend to keep up the pressure on Israel and to focus international attention on the Palestinian question. A member of the Israeli Embassy in Brussels was seriously wounded on Sunday by an Arab identifying himself as a Moroccan national. In Israel, guerrillas fired at an Israeli patrol near Hebron on the West Bank of Jordan. There were no casualties.



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Ambassador Palmer reports that a funeral being planned in Tripoli for the five fedayeen killed in Munich may set off serious demonstrations against Western embassies. Several wealthy Libyan businessmen apparently have received custody of the bodies and a large public burial is being planned. The

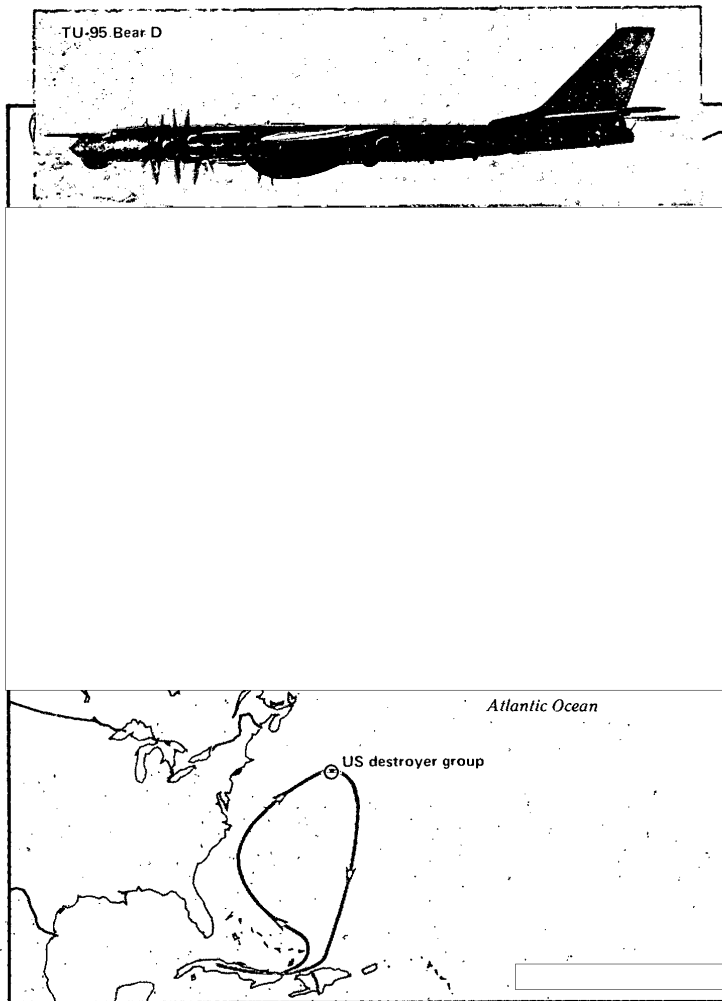
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Libyan Government is not officially involved, but government officials are reported to be assisting in planning of the services. The ambassador particularly fears that the West German diplomatic mission will be singled out for attack.

The key to the situation is President Qadhafi. Thus far, Qadhafi--who is said to have reprimanded the leaders of a mob that violently assaulted the British Embassy last month--has remained silent. Nevertheless, the Libyan leader is deeply committed to the Palestinian cause, and he could encourage excesses by inflammatory rhetoric when he delivers his tribute to the fedayeen martyrs.

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Soviet Naval Air Reconnaissance in the Atlantic



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USSR-CUBA

On Saturday and again yesterday, two of the four Soviet TU-95 naval reconnaissance aircraft that flew to Cuba last week conducted long-range missions along the east coast of the US and portions of the western Atlantic. The missions included overflights of a US destroyer task group en route to Europe. [REDACTED]

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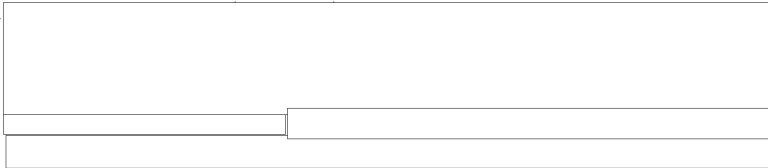
Soviet naval aircraft have deployed to Cuba on eight occasions since April 1970, but this is the first time that the aircraft have ever conducted operations from the island. The flights apparently were part of a coordinated Soviet reconnaissance effort against NATO naval forces that are moving into position for a major exercise that gets under way this week in the Norwegian and Barents seas.

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CHILE

In a press conference on Sunday President Allende publicly invited the Christian Democrats to resume talks with him "to avoid armed confrontation." In another gesture to the opposition parties, the government has authorized a major demonstration planned for Thursday.

Allende, a skillful politician, apparently recognizes that political tensions have reached a dangerous point and he is now trying to calm them. The Christian Democrats may press for more concessions before agreeing to a resumption of dialogue with him. His offer will nonetheless increase divisions between opposition groups who still favor political solutions and those who would provoke violence in the hope of a showdown that would bring down the government.

In his remarks on Sunday, Allende again denounced extremists of both the left and the right. He had particularly harsh words for the violence-prone ultras of his own Socialist Party, whom he labeled "traitors twice over."

We are inclined to believe press reports that Socialist Party Secretary General Altamirano has resigned, although Altamirano himself publicly denies the story.

Altamirano's advocacy of the extremist approach has been particularly galling to Allende and his resignation would remove one serious obstacle to Allende's efforts to calm tensions.

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JAPAN-TAIWAN

A top Foreign Office official told a US diplomat last weekend that Japan does not expect to maintain any governmental presence on Taiwan after an exchange of ambassadors with Peking. The official said that, because the problem of relations with Taiwan is an active political issue in Japan, planning is being tightly held to avoid giving Taipei's supporters ammunition with which to attack the government. As a result, there is not yet a coordinated position representing the views of the various ministries involved. Three mechanisms for continuing contacts with Taiwan are being considered--a Japanese interest section in a resident embassy, a quasi-official trade office, or a private trade and cultural association.

A Japanese Government emissary is scheduled to visit Taipei later this week, but a senior Nationalist Chinese official says his government will refuse to discuss the problem of relations in the period after Tokyo-Peking ties are restored. The official stated, however, that Taipei intends to retain the fullest possible de facto relations with Tokyo.

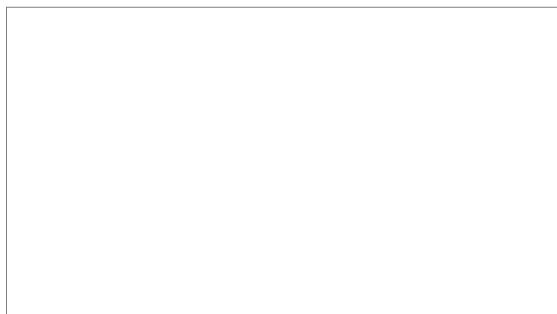
The Japanese expect some temporary disruption of trade, as well as some "unhappy incidents" in Taiwan after relations are broken. The Japanese know, however, that Taiwan could not substantially reduce its economic ties with Japan without paying a very heavy price, and thus expect a rapid return to normal trade relations. Tokyo also believes--based on its preliminary talks with the mainland Chinese--that Peking will not object to a continuation of Japan-Taiwan economic ties.

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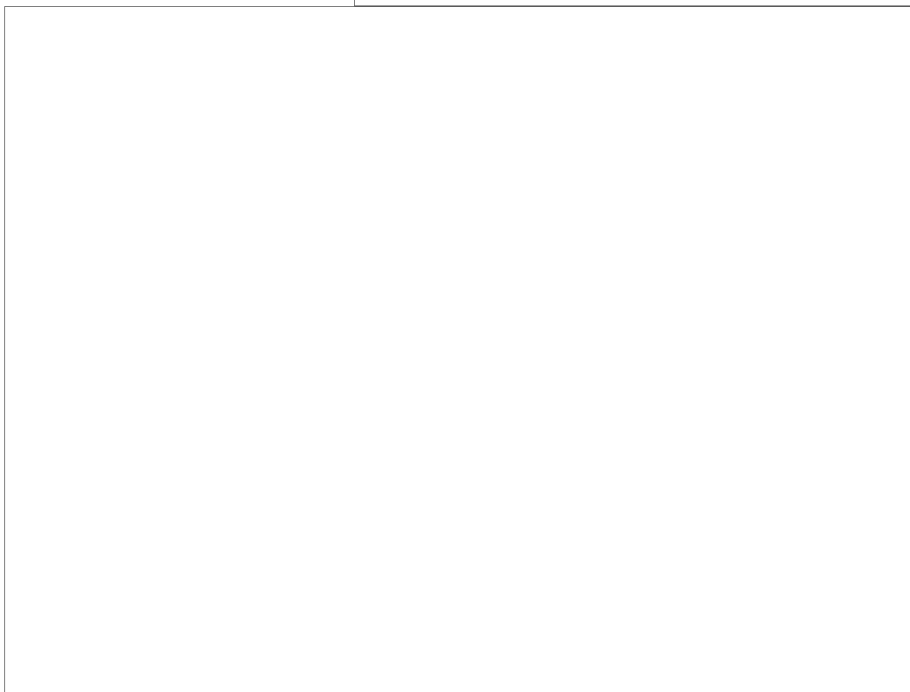
MOROCCO

Ambassador Rockwell saw King Hassan late last week for the first time since the attempted coup on 26 August. Rockwell found the King assured, eloquent, and steadfast in his refusal to perceive any personal responsibility for the situation that provoked this year's or last year's military efforts to overthrow him. The ambassador does not think that Hassan believes that there was a foreign hand behind the two coup attempts; the King, nevertheless, finds it useful to advance this thesis to distract his people from his failings and those of his regime. Hassan apparently wants to lure all political parties into participating in the parliamentary elections that he has promised by early next year. Meanwhile, the King says he will purge the army in an effort to remove further danger from that quarter. The ambassador found no indication that the King was thinking of abdication.

Even in the unlikely event that the King could lure Morocco's political parties into elections, the resulting parliament would be a source of trouble. The parties would want to turn it into a constituent assembly with the job of drafting a constitution that would lessen the King's power. In addition, a further purge of the army could serve more to aggravate already frayed military tempers than to cow them into submission. In sum, Hassan is still skating on thin ice.



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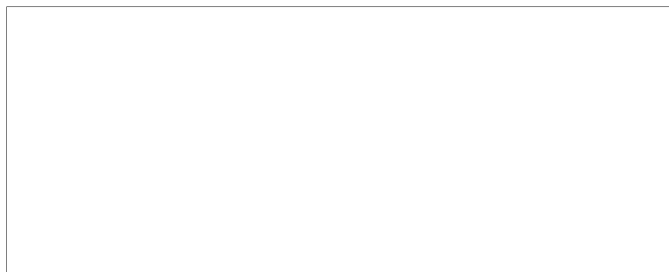
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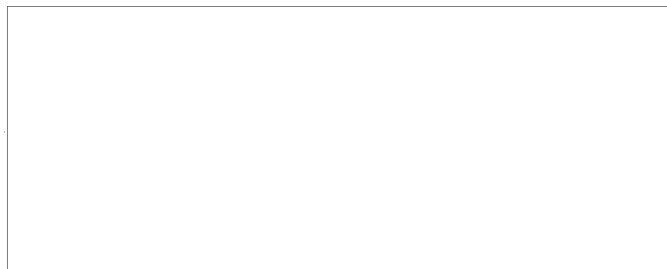
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